

Two Worldwide Trends

Commentary for June 17, 2011 — Future Changes that Affect Everyone

Identifying significant worldwide trends is difficult. One worldwide trend is the move toward individual liberty. Another trend that will affect everyone is the increasing ability to learn knowledge quickly. God will use this trend to further the purpose of His will (Ephesians 1:11).

The Trend toward Liberty, a Baby Step

At a recent meeting of the SCO (the Shanghai Cooperation Organization),¹ a mutual security organization composed of Russia, China and four other member nations in Central Asia, Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was present as an "observer" to the meeting. Iran may desire to join that organization. Ahmadinejad was able to speak separately face-to-face with the Russian Federation President Dmitry Medvedev and Chinese leader Hu Jintao. At the end of the multi-national conference a joint statement was made regarding the continuing unrest in Arab countries of the Middle East and Africa:

"On the unrest shaking the Arab world, the member states agreed on a declaration expressing concern about the instability but supporting 'the drive of regional states in the path of democratic development in accordance with their specific cultural and historical characteristics.'"

- "[Ahmadinejad Joins China, Russia Leaders at Summit](#)," accessed 6/15/11

What is important about this statement from Russia, China, the other four Central Asian countries of SCO and Iran? Why did they make such a statement? These nations felt it was necessary for their citizens to know that they gave lip-service to liberty and democracy as envisioned in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Yet these nations are themselves horrendously repressive. This is evidence that the trend toward liberty continues and is growing.²

The Trend of Four Billion with Instant Access

Another important trend that will change the world is the near-instant access to information and news from around the world available to the majority of the world's population. Author and journalist Thomas Friedman in a *New York Times* opinion editorial column for June 4, 2011 titled "[Advice for China](#)," wrote that since the year 2000 some 2 billion people in the world gained "access" to world-wide information on the Internet and smartphones. (That does not mean that every person of the 2 billion has a device themselves with access, but that they have someone close to them, a family or friend, who has such a device.) As Mr. Friedman describes the situation, in recent years:

¹ The SCO was formed in 2001 as a regional counterpart to the defense partnership of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). NATO was formed after World War II as a defensive alliance against military threats from the now defunct Soviet Union and its East European allies.

² The statement was given in English as well as in the languages of the individual member nations. Why English? English is the international language of commerce, finance, regulation, and news.

“... we went from a connected world to a ‘hyperconnected world.’ It has connected Boston, Beijing and now Baotou in inner Mongolia. This deeper penetration of connectivity is built on smarter cellphones, wireless bandwidth and social networks. This new platform for connectivity, being so cheap and mobile, is bringing **ANOTHER TWO BILLION** people into the conversation from more and more remote areas.”

• Friedman, “[Advice for China](#),” accessed 6/16/11, *emphasis mine*

Costs for technology and devices will continue to decrease, especially for Internet accessible smart cellphones. Friedman predicts that soon 4 billion people out of 7 billion alive in the world today (and 20–25% of those are young children) will have access to instant information. Any of those 4 billion people could potentially access the information contained on the ASK website — God willing. Friedman continued, in the context of the Arab uprisings:

“What the laptop plus the Internet plus the search engine did for Web pages was enable anyone with connectivity to find anything that interests them and what the cellphone plus the Internet plus Facebook are doing is enabling anyone to find anyone who interests them — and then coordinate with them and share grievances and aspirations.

The days when Arab dictators could take over the state-run TV and radio and shut off all information to their people are over. The Syrians can’t shut off their cellphone networks now any more than they can shut off their electricity grids.”

Around the world the old forms of dictatorship and oppressive control will end. Though a new kind of oppression will eventually occur, there will be a window of increasing but not complete freedom of access, expression, and greater personal liberty in more and more aspects of everyday life. That trend will continue in the near-term future, for the next several decades. Having choices gives the illusion of freedom and satisfies for a while. Eventually more will be required. Then, as Friedman writes, quoting the Russian historian Leon Aron:

“‘The spark that lights the fuse is always the quest for dignity,’ said Aron. ‘Today’s technology just makes the fire much more difficult to put out.’”

To have “dignity” means to be worthy of honor or respect.³ It is our God-given legacy. Each human being is worthy of honor and respect because he or she is created in the image of God through the first Adam and is destined to be a child of God filled with God’s Spirit through the Second Adam, Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:21–22, 45–47). God’s truth has always been available throughout history, but never so widely distributed and accessible as it is today. This knowledge will soon be available **INSTANTLY** to four out of every seven people alive in the world.

Let me quote a significant portion of Dr. Martin’s “[January 2000 Newsletter](#)” regarding his view of the future importance of the Internet. His understanding of the future significance of the Internet and the state of organized religion was insightful and correct. The underlined portions are mine and are for emphasis:

“Dear Associates, Students and Friends: The next ten to fifteen years will be some of the most important that mankind has ever experienced. Things that most

³ “Dignity,” the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

people in the world have taken for granted regarding the type of society they have lived in, the kind of philosophies that have guided their lives, the mixture of politics that have become part and parcel of their living, and even the various religious beliefs that people have held sacrosanct and immovable in their minds are about to be shaken to the very foundations. And, NO, I am NOT speaking about the Y2K affair.

Something much bigger and more important is at hand. A new way of looking at the foundational aspects of our civilizations is going to emerge. It will challenge the central concepts that have motivated most of us to be the types of persons we are at the present. Things are on the horizon that will startle you when they are placed in force. And, the changes are inevitable. You will be a part of the great morphemic consequence that will soon begin to take place. And, in actual fact, most of you will approve of the alterations, because they are going to be for the good. But if you wish to resist the inevitable and tenaciously adhere to the status quo (or even to return to what some people call 'the good old days'), then you are going to be in for some dramatic shocks that will leave you very uncomfortable with the trend that will emerge in our western societies.

The truth is, the environment that will develop (much of it propagated by the use of the Internet) will bring in a much more democratic society and political ambiance within our western civilizations. This new attitude will also spill over into the manners of life even in the undeveloped countries of the third world, but it will be more evident within the developed countries. This new change will be guided by a decided skepticism of the present establishment to solve the problems of mankind. This is because our ruling societies today are fundamentally based on historical concepts that were developed and put into an intransigent and sacred motif centuries ago when people knew nothing about our problems with the environment and space age techniques and electronic miracles.

Even we moderns are amazed at the things we see around us in this highly scientific age. We are able to observe that the potential for great growth and a happy civilization for all are within our grasp, but the tools we are presently working with are antiquated like the Model T of Henry Ford or the electric light bulb of Thomas Edison. We are still backward in thinking. Many Christians are so 'horse and buggy days' in their thinking that they believe the Internet is a device of Satan the Devil to destroy the work of Christ. In no way is this true. It is the means to get the Gospel to the whole world, and we at ASK are taking every advantage that God the Father gives us to teach His truth to the world by the Internet.

... What people call 'good times' will continue on the horizon for the next ten years (that is, in our western world). But great changes are on tap. The people of the next Millennium will realize that the churches, mosques and synagogues of the previous one thousand years (from 1000 AD to 2000 AD) were great falsifiers of truth.

Let us look at facts. If a person who lived 400 years ago were transported into our age and saw what has been accomplished scientifically, the person would be dazzled. But if the same person surveyed the teachings and actions of the Roman Catholic Church (or our Protestant Churches), the person would readily admit that those churches had changed very little from those of his day. In fact, the person would be amazed to discover that such churches have only limited powers based on nostalgic themes of the past. They have NO dynamic political or religious thrusts that show them in the mainstream of government and authority (as they once were). Indeed, the person would see how little power they actually demonstrate. Note. World Wars I and II (when multiplied millions of people were killed) were inspired by people in Catholic and Protestant nations who paid

not the slightest attention to what the leaders of their Christian denominations stated. Why, the churches of the world are about as useless and insignificant in governing political and religious movements on earth as a three dollar bill.

You need to read this month's Prophetic Report [["The Greatest Revolution in Human History"](#)]. It will address some of these matters that people in the next few years are going to solve. And organized Christianity (along with organized Islam, and, yes, even organized Judaism, and the organized religions of China and India, etc.) are going to be shaken to their very foundations. They will NOT survive in their former nostalgic patterns that have dominated their reason for existence over the past 400 years. They will have to change drastically. The laity of these religious organizations will find themselves taking over the church hierarchies and demanding that organized churches and mosques and synagogues finally enter the arena of the modern world — the world of this new Millennium that is at our doorstep! You need to read the Prophetic Report for this January. It has new information that will enlighten you to events soon to occur on this earth.

There is a companion article that I will provide for you ... If you want to know more fully what the immediate future holds for you (and for all people in the world), then you should order next month's Prophetic Report [["The Seven Hills of Jerusalem"](#)] ... It shows the prophetic struggle throughout the centuries by two religious capitals of the world. Those cities are Jerusalem and Rome. And, before the Second Advent of Christ, this article shows the city that will predominate and win the final religious battle. The winner will be Jerusalem. ... It is the "Seven Hills of Jerusalem" that will succeed. By the way, it may surprise you that Vatican Hill in Rome was NOT one of the original seven hills of Rome. You will be shocked at the evidence from the historical records that show that our present systems are NOT in accord with the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. Some major changes will soon come to pass that will bring the world closer to those biblical teachings. They will be non-violent. ...

For our Internet Readers: For all of you who read the publications of ASK on the Internet, we feel that you will want to contribute funds each month to help us in paying the costs for the services that we provide. If you feel that what you read is worthwhile (and worth supporting financially), we at the ASK office would appreciate any contributions you can give to help us teach the Gospel of Christ to all in the world who may want it. We are an *ekklesia* of God (often called a 'church' in common parlance) that specializes in teaching the Gospel without requiring an attendance at church services. We at the office of ASK supply you with material each month so that you may do as the apostle Peter stated in 2 Peter 3:18 to '[grow in grace and in knowledge.](#)' Our ministry is like that of the apostle Paul who did not consider it his responsibility to baptize people (1 Corinthians 1:17) or to perform pastoral duties associated with some church congregations. We are in the field of education and evangelization in the Christian *ekklesia*. We provide ... teachings in a great abundance of material for the Internet.

Dr. Ernest L. Martin, January 2000

We should all pray for God to open the minds of people around the world, directing them to excellent biblical teaching available to them — particularly those of ASK — biblical, historical, and background teachings that cannot be found elsewhere. Pray that God brings many people from around the world to the ASK website to learn God's Word and to grow in faith, through the teachings of Dr. Ernest L. Martin, a master educator.

David Sielaff
david@askelm.com